

## PREFACE

This publication has a lengthy history. In 1981 the Statewide Planning Program, via the efforts of a summer intern, conducted a feasibility study. That study noted readily available housing data and rated it in accordance with time frame, geographical distribution, and quality standards.

The study concluded that a housing data base could be assembled that would provide many benefits. Some of these were:

- A resource for updating the Housing Element of the State Guide Plan,
- A relatively current annual inventory of Rhode Island housing characteristics,
- Identification of areas of growth and decline,
- Identification of areas where a surplus or shortage of housing exists,
- A source of vital information to government and private organizations offering social services to the public,
- Supportive information to decisionmakers concerned with housing issues, and
- An indicator of changes and/or trends of various housing-related subjects.

The number of requests for copies of previous editions of the Housing Data Base is evidence that a single statistical abstract is needed to serve as a general reference for the many parties interested in the status of Rhode Island's housing.

The first *Housing Data Base* was published in December 1990 by the Division of Planning, as Report Number 67. It contained over 40 data sets, although no data were then available from the 1990 Census.

The second edition was published in January 1992 as Report Number 73. The limited availability of information from the 1990 census at the time of publication allowed for some expansion and updating of several tables. The full availability of detailed 1990 census data prompted the publication in February 1996 of the third edition (Report Number 88) of the Housing Data Base. A wealth of information pertaining to the population of Rhode Island and housing finally became available and proved the basis of the 1996 publication. Additional sources of information were also tapped to provide as comprehensive a reference as possible. The most noticeable change in the 1996 edition was the addition of a separate section presenting information descriptive of Rhode Island's infrastructure as it relates to housing issues.

The 2003 edition results from the availability of data from the 2000 census. Many of the questions asked in the 2000 census are the same as in 1990. Several changes however, afford us the opportunity to present new data sets of information previously not recorded in the decennial census. Not all changes allow for the presentation of new or expanded data sets; some changes resulted in the elimination of questions providing information on such topics as *Source of Water* and *Sewage Disposal Systems*. In such instances, Statewide Planning has decided to republish 1990 data sets of information no longer collected by the Census Bureau but still determined to be of significant interest and importance.

Perhaps the most controversial change made to the 2000 census was the opportunity for individuals to select multiple census categories to identify race. Persons of mixed parentage were able – for the first time – to identify themselves as multiracial, and to denote specific racial categories to define their lineage. Even the terminology describing race and ethnicity used in the 2000 census was revised to conform with contemporary nomenclature.

The Housing Data Base has Rhode Island's housing conditions as its reason for being, but over the past two decades it has proven useful to many outside the housing community who simply need an easy-to-read compilation of basic statewide demographic information. It has proven to be one of Statewide Planning's most popular publications.

This fourth edition of the *Housing Data Base* was updated and expanded by Mark G. Brown, Principal Planner, under the supervision of Alvin N. Johnson, Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning, and the guidance of John P. O'Brien, Chief, Statewide Planning. Mansuet J. Giusti, Supervising Draftsperson, Vincent Flood, Principal Research Technician, and Christina Delage, GIS Technician, provided graphics and GIS technologies. Kim Gelfuso, Information Services Technician II, prepared the final document for internet access.

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